

## **This is bullshit by DeutchRemy**

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**Language:** English

**Characters:** Eleven | Jane Hopper, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers

**Relationships:** Eleven | Jane Hopper & Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers & Eleven | Jane Hopper, Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper

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**Summary:**

My take on the classic "El gets her first period!" fic.

## 1. Chapter 1

June 15, 1985

3:30 PM

“hurts.” The girl in the passenger seat whines and then sniffs wetly.

“I know it hurts, baby. We’re gonna go home, you’re gonna take a nice hot shower and you’re gonna lay on the couch and we’ll watch some TV. Okay?”

El doesn’t respond. Hopper reaches over and gives her knee a squeeze.

“Okay?”

The girl sighs but eventually responds shakily “...okay.”

“Now I know this is scary but I’m glad you were at Joyce’s when it happened instead of at home alone.”

“wanna go home.” A fresh tear joins the dried tracks on her cheeks.

“We’re goin’ home, kid, we’re goin’ home. It’s gonna be okay. Remember this happens to all girls.”

“don’t-don’t want it to.”

“I know, but it’s normal. It happens to Joyce. It happens to Nancy. It happens to your mama and your aunt.”

“but...don’t want it to.”

“I don’t want it to happen to you, either, but it’s a part of life, sweetie.”

“scared.”

“I know you’re scared, honey, and it’s fine to be scared. It’s a big change. Now...what do you want for dinner? We’ll get takeout. Anything you want. I’ll pick it up after we get home.”

Silence.

“El?”

She shakes her head. “no.”

“You gotta give me more than that, kid. No what?”

The girl wipes her face with her palm. “not hungry.”

“You’re not hungry cuz of the pain in your tummy or you’re not hungry cuz you’re upset?”

El shrugs and looks out the window. Her lower lip trembles as fresh tears seep from her red, stinging eyes.

“Joyce gave you some medicine for the pain, yeah?”

“not working.”

“It probably just hasn’t kicked in yet. Now c’mon, let’s talk dinner.”

“this is bullshit.”

Hopper nearly veers into a cornfield. “Where did you learn that language, young lady?”

“you.”

“Oh. Right.”

Two hours earlier...

1:30 PM

“Hawkins Police Department, Chief Hopper.”

“Hop, it’s Joyce.”

“What’s wrong? Is she okay?”

“She’s fine, Hop, but she, um...just got her period.”

Silence.

“Hop...you still alive?”

“Yeah I-I’m alive. Oh god. I-i-is she alright?”

“Physically, yes, of course, but she’s really upset. Didn’t you talk to her about this?”

“Yeah, o-of course I did...once...”

“Okay, well maybe you should have spoken to her more than once because the way she reacted...Hop, the way she screamed, I honestly thought the demogorgon had appeared in the bathroom.”

“Jesus.”

“I’m just glad she was here and not alone at the cabin when this happened. Can you imagine how scared she would have been?”

“Thanks, but I’d rather not think about that. Now can I get my stuff together and come pick up my daughter, or do you still have to finish nominating me for Worst Dad of the Year?”

“I wasn’t...just...try to get here as soon as you can.”

Click.

## 2. Chapter 2

45 minutes later...

2:15 PM

“Hop, you know the award for Worst Dad of the Year goes to Lonnie, right?” Is the first thing out of Joyce’s mouth the moment she opens the front door. “He gets it every year. There’s a ceremony and everything.”

Hopper grins in spite of himself as he lumbers up the porch steps but quickly becomes somber. “Well I still feel like the worst.”

“Don’t. I’m sorry if I came off that way. You’re doing a wonderful job raising El. And you certainly wouldn’t be the first father to shy away from talking to his daughter about menstruation. Hell, my own mother made my big sister give me the talk.”

She steps out onto the porch to join him, shutting the door behind her.

“She’s napping in my bed so we have a few minutes.” Joyce notices the look on the man’s face; he’s anxious to get in and make sure his kid’s still in one piece. She places a steadying hand on his firm bicep. “She’ll be okay while we talk.”

Hopper runs a hand down his face and pinches the bridge of his nose. “Joyce, I-I spoke to her once, but that was’t too long after I took her in.” He accepts the cigarette and light that she offers.

“She wasn’t even close to getting it but she’d seen an ad on TV and questioned me about it. So I gave her the most basic of explanations and she seemed satisfied. Then I just kept putting off the big conversation, you know? I figured I had plenty of time. Even after she turned 14. I think I was in denial that she wasn’t 12 anymore.”

“I don’t think any parent truly wants their child to grow up.”

“Well, yes and no. I’d have given anything to see Sarah grow up. But

El? I'd give anything for time to slow down a bit. If I could wake up every morning and make waffles for her little 12 year old face, I'd be happy."

"I know. I feel the same about Will." A dreamy look settles over her face but she catches herself before she falls too deep into the pit of nostalgia. "Anyway, uh, I put her soiled clothes in the wash."

"You didn't have to do that, I could have just taken them home a--"

The woman puts up her hand.

"Hop, if she sees those again before they're clean she'll probably try to burn them. They're already in the machine. You can pick them up next time El comes over."

"I just hope she wants to come back."

Joyce looks alarmed. "W-why wouldn't --"

"I just mean she's the queen of avoidance. If something upsets her she avoids any reminder of it. I'm talking extreme levels here. Last month she got brain freeze eating a grape popsicle and now she refuses to eat the grape ones. She'll remove them from the package and shove them into the back corner of the freezer so she won't even have to touch them more than necessary."

"Yeah...Will won't eat candy anymore because it was Halloween that everything, you know...started up again. He's become a bit, um, what's the term?" She snaps her fingers, trying to recall.

"Obsessive compulsive?"

"That's it! Yeah, he seems to have gotten it in his head that if he does any of the same stuff he did on Halloween night the Mind Flayer is going to come back." Joyce shudders. "He won't eat candy, he won't touch a camcorder, and he threw his Ghostbusters costume in the trash. I mean, I get it, negative associations and stuff, but goddamn, I worked hard putting that costume together." She chuckles, forcing smoke through her nose.

"Kids. Can't live with 'em and you can't live without 'em. Speaking of

which,” Hopper puts out his cigarette in the ashtray that Joyce placed on the porch railing, “I should get mine home.”

“She’s in my bed.” Joyce reiterates as she opens the front door. “She may want to shower when you guys get home. And uh, you may have to encourage her to clean down there because she was so freaked out by the whole situation that she refused to even open her eyes. I helped her out, though, so she’s clean, but by the time you get home she may need another wash.”

“You’re a lifesaver, Joyce.”

“I’m a mom.”

“So, is she bleeding like...a lot?” There’s more than just a tinge of worry in the man’s voice, and in his eyes.

“Moderate, I’d say. Enough to be pretty scary for her.”

“She-she’s gonna be okay, though, right?”

“Of course she is, Hop. It’s a bit heavy but since this is her first one it’ll probably stop in a couple days anyway.” The woman puts a hand on his arm. “Stop. Worrying.”

“I can’t help it. She’s my kid.”

“The boys were all worried about her, too. It was really sweet.”

Hopper’s eyes go wide. “You better not have let Wheeler into the bathroom!”

“Of course I didn’t! Jesus, Hop.”

“Sorry.”

“He did keep knocking on the door, though, asking if she was okay.”

“Little shit.” He runs a hand through his hair. “Sometimes I think I should put a restraining order on that kid until El is 18 at least.”

“Hop, he was scared. He only wanted to make sure El was okay, not

be a pervert.”

Hopper grunts and eases himself down onto the edge of Joyce’s mattress. El is lying on her side, facing away from him. He pets her hair then rubs his hand in a circle between her shoulder blades.

“Rise and shine.”

Since those three words have essentially been her alarm clock for the past year and a half, the girl stirs and rolls over. Upon seeing her dad, tears fill her reddened eyes and she scooches over as close as she can to him, pressing her face into his back and forcing him to rotate awkwardly so she can rest her head on his thigh instead.

“Hey, kiddo. How you feelin?”

El doesn’t answer, only shakes her head, her hair scritchng against his khaki pants.

“That mean bad?”

She nods slowly, sleepily.

“I gave her some Advil.” Joyce mentions from the doorway. “Maybe twenty minutes ago.”

“She in pain?”

“Yeah. Cramps. Pretty bad ones, too, it seems.”

“Your tummy hurt, kiddo?”

Nod.

“Okay.” His eyes glisten as he pets her hair. “Well we’re gonna go home, alright? And you can spend the rest of the day relaxing on the couch.”

“pants...mmm-messed up. blood.”

“They’re gonna be okay. Joyce is washing them. She’ll give them back when they’re nice and clean.”



“go home?”

“Yeah. Yeah, we’re gonna go home, just like I said. You wearin’ anything under those blankies?”

“I gave her a pair of my shorts. All my clean underpants were in the wash, though.”

“So she’s not wearing a pad?” A look of alarm crosses Hopper’s face. “Joyce, tell me she’s not using a -“

“Oh god no, Hop! Jesus, first you think I let Mike into the bathroom now you think I gave a 14-year-old a tampon?” She takes a deep breath to regain her composure; Joyce Byers tolerates many things, but insinuating that she doesn’t know how to parent a girl is unacceptable. “No, Hop, she’s not wearing anything. The shorts are hers to keep. They’re about a year older than she is and the elastic in the waistband is starting to get brittle.”

Joyce pulls the blanket from El’s legs, revealing a pair of dark blue shorts that look quite ratty indeed, as well as a folded white towel underneath her. “You should probably bring that towel for the car.”

### 3. Chapter 3

Two hours later...

4:15 PM

“Hungry yet?”

The immobile form on the couch shakes her head no.

“You sure? I got all your favorites. Veggie lo mein, chicken with scallions, veggie spring rolls...am I gonna have to eat this all by myself?”

Silence.

“Alright then...”

Hopper piles his plate high, grabs a beer, and eases himself into his armchair. He reaches over and squeezes El’s foot.

“You gonna lie there and be grumpy for the rest of the night?”

El huffs out a sigh and doesn’t answer.

“That’s okay. You’re allowed to be grumpy.” He takes a drink of his beer.

8:15 PM

“Byers residence.”

“Joyce, it’s me.”

“Everything okay?”

“Yeah, I just - El’s really tired. Is this normal? Is she losing too much blood? Is that making her tired? I’ve just, never seen her so tired, except after she closed the gate. But she won’t tell me how much

she's bleeding because I don't think she knows how much is too much and she won't eat her dinner and - "

"Hop. Take a deep breath and calm down for me, okay? First of all, it's after eight and El's had a big day. I think she's entitled to be a bit tired."

"I know, Joyce, but she's more tired than normal. I mean...is that okay? Is that normal? And she won't eat her dinner and she's, I don't know...mad at me for some reason. She's just being a lump on the couch. A grumpy lump."

"Hop, relax. Everything you just listed is totally normal." There's an audible sigh of relief on the other end of the line. "I know you're worried, because she's your daughter, but you are overthinking this. Some girls get really tired during their period. It's hormones. It's all normal. And I'm sure she's mad at you because you're a guy and guys don't get periods. Just wait a bit and she'll probably say it right to your face."

There's silence on the other end of the line and Joyce is about to ask Hopper if he's still there, when he speaks. "Joyce, I...I don't know what I'd do without you."

"I don't think you give yourself enough credit, Jim Hopper. I know girl stuff can be confusing for men but single dads have been figuring it out for generations."

Although Hopper has essentially been a single dad for roughly a year and a half, it's still strange to hear people say it, and he wonders if Joyce can tell that he's smiling over the phone.

"Anyway...I still have to prep Will's lunch for tomorrow, so I hope you don't mind if I let you go, Hop. But you know I'm always a phone call away if you have any other questions. Any at all."

"You're a treasure, Joyce. I mean that."

"Oh stop it." Joyce chides playfully. "Well, uh, g'night, Hop."

"Good night, Joyce. Sleep tight."

“Don’t let the bedbugs bite.”